

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 488

By Miller L

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Deanie Parker,
President and Executive Director of Soulsville,
upon the opening of the Stax Museum of
American Soul Music.

WHEREAS, from the mountains in the East, to the honky-tonks of Nashville, to the streets of Memphis, the sounds of music emanate from every corner of this great State; and

WHEREAS, from Hank Williams to Elvis Presley, the Carter Family to the Staple Singers, and Otis Redding to Isaac Hayes, Tennessee has borne and nourished the music that revolutionized American culture; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee is recognized throughout the world as the home to country music, the blues, and sweet soul music; and

WHEREAS, Deanie Parker is one citizen of this State who evinces a love and respect for the sounds, cultures, and sites of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, the former publicist for Stax Records, Ms. Parker has fought for years to develop a fitting tribute to the Stax legacy; on May 2, 2003, as President and Executive Director of Soulsville, she will open the doors of the Stax Museum of American Soul Music in Memphis to the public; and

WHEREAS, as one of the developers of the Stax Museum, she recognizes the utmost importance of the music that was created within the walls of the Stax Records recording studios; the Museum is devoted to the documentation and preservation of the Stax legacy; and

WHEREAS, in 1959, former country fiddler Jim Stewart, and his sister, Estelle Axton, founded what would, in 1961, become Stax Records; the label's first hit was "Cause I Love You," by Rufus and Carla Thomas; and

WHEREAS, second only to Motown in popular soul music sales and influence, Stax Records was nevertheless first in gritty, raw, stripped-down soul; featuring artists like Otis Redding, Rufus & Carla Thomas, and Isaac Hayes, and with house band Booker T. and the MGs, and horn section The Memphis Horns, Stax placed over 167 hit songs in the top 100 of the pop charts and an astounding 243 hits in the top 100 of the R & B charts over the course of fifteen years; and

WHEREAS, Deanie Parker was hired as a publicist at Stax in 1964, becoming only the second employee for the fledgling label; and

WHEREAS, even before she was hired, she had written songs for the young label; she continued writing throughout the label's life for artists like The Mad Lads, Otis Redding, and Carla Thomas; and

WHEREAS, her most popular song, "Ain't That a Lot of Love," co-written with the late Homer Banks, was recorded by Sam and Dave, the Rolling Stones, and Simply Red; and

WHEREAS, the influence of the Stax sound can still be felt thirty years later in so many musical genres; songs like "Green Onions," "(Sittin' on the) Dock of the Bay," "Soul Man," "I'll Take You There," "Hold On, I'm Comin'," and "Theme from Shaft," have become part of the popular music vernacular, and they are instantly recognizable by music fans and casual listeners alike; and

WHEREAS, perhaps most vital to the success of Stax Records was the cooperation between white and black musicians and producers, an integration that was practically unprecedented at the time; and

WHEREAS, through these many years, the Stax legacy has remained strong, for though the spirit was beset by the blows of circumstance, it was in the music until the end, when Stax Records was forced to take bankruptcy in 1975; and

WHEREAS, though the walls of the original Stax Records have fallen, the dedicated fans of soul music, Stax-style, have kept its heartbeat alive; and

WHEREAS, disgusted by the demise of Stax Records and the subsequent demolition of the building that housed it, Deanie Parker has played a vital role in the Stax revival, having worked for so many years to preserve the Stax legacy and to share its legend; and

WHEREAS, indeed, the Stax influence continues to be felt worldwide; visitors from across the nation and the globe will journey to Memphis to visit the Stax Museum, a standing monument to the legacy of the most famous soul music record label from Tennessee, dedicated to the memories of the Stax Records family; and

WHEREAS, the love of everything and everyone that was and is Stax is the common bond among all of the visitors to the Stax Museum, and they have Deanie Parker to thank for this most touching tribute; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting for the members of this General Assembly to pause and thank Ms. Parker for her hard work to preserve the Stax legacy and her stellar service to the people of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, as the great Stax duo, Sam & Dave, might say: "We've got to thank you"; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby thank Deanie Parker for her dedication to the preservation of

Memphis Soul Music and the Stax legacy, congratulate her upon the Grand Opening of the Stax Museum of American Soul Music, and wish her success in her every future endeavor.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.